



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS ON SRHR ADVOCACY USING UPR MECHANISM

Point Zone Resort, Arusha



26 & 27 January 2026

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report documents a capacity building workshop organized to strengthen the ability of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and civil society actors in Tanzania to advocate for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) using the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism. The workshop forms part of a regional initiative to build a resilient and inclusive social movement to monitor and advance government commitments on SRHR in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

2 TRAINING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 BACKGROUND



Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders Tanzania (CWHRDs TZ) is “an affiliation of women who decided to come together to defend WHRDs who promote and protect human rights in Tanzania.” CWHRDs TZ is a Non-Governmental Organization registered under the NGOs Act 2002 in 2019 and is based in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

To adequately fulfil its mandate and in line with its five years’ strategic plan (2022-2026) which aim to see “*a Tanzania in which all women and girls are free from all sorts of human rights abuses*”, the Coalition is implementing a project on “**Building a Resilient and Inclusive Regional Social Movement to Oversee the Implementation of SRHR Commitments by Governments in Kenya, Uganda, And Tanzania**”

The project is implemented in partnership with the East African Centre for Human Rights (EACHRights), African Gender and Media Initiative (GEM) Trust (Kenya), and the Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) (Uganda). The project seeks to strengthen social movements to use the UPR mechanism as a key advocacy tool for advancing SRHR.

Project Goal & Main Objective

Project Goal - “To contribute to strengthening social movements in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to undertake SRHR advocacy”.

Specific objective: “To support SRHR social movements in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to undertake advocacy using the UPR mechanism”.

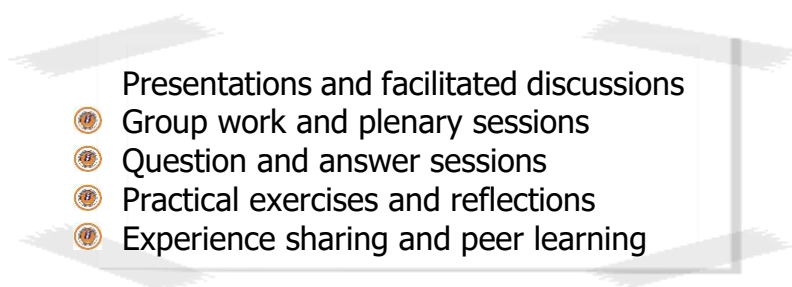
2.2 OBJECTIVES

1. To build the capacity of participants on how to use the UPR mechanism.
3. To enhance participants’ ability to advocate for SRHR using a human rights-based approach.

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|---|---|
| 2. To strengthen understanding on SRHR as a human rights issue. | 4. To equip participants with practical advocacy skills to engage duty bearers and influence SRHR-related legal and policy reforms. |
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3 METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPATION

The training adopted a participatory and rights-based approach, combining:



This methodology was designed to strengthen both conceptual understanding and practical advocacy skills, with a focus on applying the UPR mechanism to SRHR advocacy.

The training brought together WHRDs, civil society organization (CSO) representatives, and members of SRHR and human rights social movements in Tanzania, particularly those engaged in advocacy, documentation of violations, and community-level engagement on SRHR issues. A total of 30 participants, of whom 83% were female and 17% were male, participated in the training. CSOs which were represented included Teen Corridor Organization, Jumuiya Ya Maendeleo Ya Elimu Ya Watoto Pemba, Tanzania Child Welfare, CAGBV, Young and Alive Initiative, Crisis Resolving Center, Macho Kwa Jamii, Women Action on Eco-Health and Legal Rights (WAE-HEAL), Tanzania Centre for Economic and Social Rights (TACESR), Arusha Women Legal Aid and Human Rights Organization (AWLAHURIO), Women's Promotion Centre (WPC), Women Woke Up (WOWAP), SMCCT Singida, PGWOCODE, and ZAHLO. Others were Songambele Initiative, SIWOC, Hope for Youth Development Mwanza, TACHIS, and CWHRDs Tz.

4 DAY ONE

SESSION ONE: OPENING

Opening & Welcome Remarks

The workshop was officially opened with welcome remarks, introductions, and an overview of the purpose of the training, setting the tone for collaboration and shared learning. The short remarks were delivered by Mr. Marko Gideon from CWHRD Tz, on behalf of the National Coordinator, Ms. Hilda Stuard Dadu.

About CWHRDs Tz & Project Overview

The opening remarks were followed by a word about CWHRD Tz and Project Overview by the Board Chairperson, Dr. Gladness Munuo. She introduced the participants to CWHRDs Tz, its mandate, and the regional SRHR project, including project goals, partners, and expected outcomes. She urged active participation to achieve training objectives.

Training Objectives

The lead facilitator, Mr. Gilbert Onyango, who is an Advocate, UPR Expert, and the Executive Director of EACHRights, presented the overall training objectives and expected learning outcomes to align participant expectations. He also explained the activity and relevant outputs, namely "Status of SRHR in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania established" (Output 1) and "Capacity of 140 CSO members of social movements in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to undertake advocacy on SRHR at the national and sub-national levels using the UPR mechanism enhanced" (Output 2).

SESSION TWO: DISCUSSION ON DRAFT SRHR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS BASELINE SURVEY REPORT

Before the training, the participants were taken through the draft baseline survey report on SRHR social movements in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The presentation, made by Mr. Edwin Ochieng (consultant), touched on the objectives of the baseline survey; technical approach and scope; baseline methodology, including limitation and mitigations; baseline findings, and key recommendations. The main aim of the session was to validate the report, obtaining key inputs from the participants to improve the report.



The facilitator explained that the baseline survey was designed to establish a clear starting point against which progress under the regional project can be measured. Among the objectives were to establish the existing structures and formations of SRHR social movements in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania and assess the organizational and

advocacy capacities of key actors engaged in SRHR advocacy across the three countries. Participants were informed that the baseline would serve as a reference point for tracking project impact and guiding adaptive programming.

The presentation outlined the technical approach used in conducting the baseline survey, emphasizing that the survey adopted a regional and comparative perspective across the three project countries. The facilitator noted that this approach was intended to capture both common regional trends and country-specific dynamics to inform tailored national strategies while strengthening regional coherence.



Participants were briefed on the methodology used to collect and analyze baseline data. The presentation highlighted a range of qualitative methods employed to ensure comprehensive and reliable findings, including key informant interviews (KIIs). The presentation also addressed limitations encountered during the baseline process, including the study being conducted entirely through online methods and political tensions in Tanzania.

The facilitator summarized key emerging findings from the draft baseline, which generally indicated commitments related to SRHR. However, the facilitator pointed out several challenges in advancing SRHR, including gaps in legal and policy frameworks and political and cultural resistance. Participants reflected that these findings resonated with their lived experiences and underscored the relevance of the capacity building workshop.

The facilitator emphasized that the baseline survey findings would directly inform project implementation, training priorities, and advocacy strategies. Participants were encouraged to view the baseline not as a static report, but as a living reference point to guide learning, adaptation, and measurement of progress over time. He also encouraged the participants to read the draft report, to be shared, to provide more inputs and improve the report.

SESSION THREE: SRH AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AND CURRENT SITUATION IN TANZANIA

This session was facilitated by Mr. Fundikila Wazambi, a human rights expert and researcher from the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC). He started the session by asking the participants about types of rights and later informed them that they are human rights, legal rights, and moral rights. The focus of the session was sexual and reproductive health (SRH) as a human rights issue.



Governments have obligations to **respect, protect,** and **fulfill** human rights

The facilitator emphasized that SRH is not merely a health or social issue, but is fundamentally a human rights issue grounded in international, regional, and national human rights frameworks. He explained that SRHR are derived from universally recognized human rights and are essential to human dignity, bodily autonomy, and equality. Participants were guided to understand that denying

access to SRH services is not only a public health concern but also a violation of basic human rights and specifically sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR).

“

There are three types of rights. One of them is civil and political rights.

Participant

”

The presentation highlighted that SRH is directly linked to a range of internationally recognized rights and the participants were able to mention some of the rights, which include the right to health, the right to life, the right to privacy, the right to information, the right to equality and non-discrimination, the right to freedom from violence. Participants were reminded that human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent, meaning that the violation of one right often leads to the violation of others.



This session also included a discussion about components of SRH, which the participants were able to correctly point out in groups. The facilitator and participants also discussed common SRHR violations, including lack of access to and poor quality of SRHR services, discriminatory laws and policies, requirements for a third-party authorization (such as parental or spousal consent) to access to SRHR services, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other harmful practices. They agreed that these violations were part of systemic human rights concerns rather than isolated incidents.

SESSION FOUR: WRAP-UP

Participants reflected on key learnings from Day One, engaged in questions and answers, and summarized priority issues for deeper discussion on Day Two.

5 DAY TWO

SESSION FIVE: DAY ONE RECAP

This session was facilitated by Mr. Fundikila Wazambi. Participants reflected on key takeaways from Day One and clarified outstanding issues. The key takeaways included human rights duties and characteristics, core components of SRH, why SRH is a human rights issue, human rights linked to SRH, and SRHR violations.

SESSION SIX: UNDERSTANDING THE UPR MECHANISM AND ITS RELEVANCE TO SRHR ADVOCACY

The facilitator, Mr. Gilbert Onyango, started the session by providing a historical overview to show how the modern human rights system developed, discussing how the atrocities of the Second World War (1939–1945) led to the creation of the United Nations and the recognition of the need for a global human rights framework. He pointed out that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted in 1948, affirming the universality, equality, and indivisibility of human rights, and paving way for the adoption of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), both adopted by the UN in 1966.



The participants were then introduced to the overall UN human rights system, which is made up of two main pillars, namely treaty-based mechanisms and charter-based mechanisms, setting the tone for discussion on various established committees, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), Special Procedures, and UPR. The facilitator emphasized that the UPR is unique because it reviews all UN Member States and covers all human rights, even where a State has not ratified certain treaties.

“

Human rights are entitlement one has simply because they are human being.

Participant

”

Speaking about features of treaty monitoring mechanisms, the facilitator outlined key features and limitations of treaty monitoring bodies, including being based on specific treaties and only apply to States that have ratified those treaties; reviews being conducted by committees of independent experts; and States often delaying reports. Participants reflected that while treaty bodies are important, these limitations make it necessary to also use complementary mechanisms such as the UPR to ensure broader accountability. The participants thereafter engaged in a practical exercise in which they were asked to:

- ① Identify a key human rights problem in their community
- ① Identify causes and effects of the problem
- ① Link the problem to relevant national laws and international treaties
- ① Identify available data, statistics, and real-life examples
- ① Propose at least one recommendation that could be made to the Government of Tanzania or through the UPR

This exercise helped participants apply theory to real-life advocacy and demonstrated how community issues can be translated into UPR-ready human rights concerns and recommendations.



The facilitator explained that the UPR is a state-driven, peer-review mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council that reviews the human rights records of all UN Member States on a regular cycle (approximately every 4.5–5 years), is based on three key documents (a national report by the State under Review, a compilation of UN information prepared by OHCHR, and a summary of stakeholder information, including civil society submissions). He emphasized that the UPR is universal, periodic, cooperative, participatory, and practical. Participants discussed the strategic value of the UPR for SRHR advocacy, noting that it provides a platform to raise SRHR issues internationally, leverage for national advocacy, opportunities to engage both the Government and other UN Member States, and increased visibility and accountability.

The last part of this session focused on Tanzania's UPR. The facilitator discussed Tanzania's participation in the UPR process and its relevance for national advocacy. Key points included Tanzania, like all UN Member States, is subject to regular UPR reviews, and CSOs in Tanzania have opportunities to submit stakeholder reports, engage in national consultations, lobby recommending States, and follow up on accepted recommendations at national level.

Participants highlighted the importance of using the UPR to track Tanzania's commitments on SRHR, advocate for legal and policy reforms, monitor implementation of accepted recommendations, and hold duty bearers accountable for progress and gaps. The facilitator concluded that understanding Tanzania's position within the UPR system is essential for strategic, evidence-based SRHR advocacy and for strengthening the role of WHRDs and CSOs in influencing both national and international human rights processes.

SESSION SEVEN: ADVOCATING FOR SRHR USING THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

This short session, facilitated by Mr. Gilbert Onyango, focused on translating knowledge of the UPR mechanism into practical advocacy action for advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Tanzania. The facilitator emphasized that the UPR should be understood not as a one-off UN event, but as a continuous advocacy cycle that can be used strategically before, during, and after Tanzania's review.

The facilitator guided participants through the process of preparing effective UPR stakeholder submissions, emphasizing that these reports are one of the most powerful entry points for civil society. Participants were advised that strong submissions should:

- ① Clearly identify priority SRHR issues based on evidence and lived experiences
- ① Link each issue to specific human rights obligations and standards
- ① Include concise, credible data and case examples
- ① Propose clear, actionable, and measurable recommendations to the Government

Participants discussed the importance of joint submissions to amplify impact, reduce duplication, and present a united civil society voice on SRHR.

The facilitator emphasized the importance of engaging the Government of Tanzania during the preparation of the national UPR report. Participants were encouraged to:

- ① Participate in government-led consultations
- ① Submit written inputs on SRHR priorities
- ① Advocate for inclusion of SRHR issues in the national report
- ① Use national platforms, such as NHRIs (e.g. CHRAG) and sector ministries, to raise concerns

Participants noted that early engagement increases the likelihood that SRHR concerns will be recognized and addressed before the international review. They also shared that the session helped them better understand how to translate community SRHR issues into human rights language suitable for UPR submissions, use international recommendations to strengthen national advocacy, work collaboratively as coalitions to increase influence, and view the UPR as a long-term advocacy strategy rather than a one-time reporting exercise.

Ms. Jane Otieno, also from EACHRights, was also invited to share the Kenya situation experience on SRHR and UPR engagement. This enabled the participants to learn and make comparisons with Tanzania, including constitutional guarantees on SRHR.



The session concluded with a shared understanding that effective use of the UPR can significantly strengthen SRHR advocacy in Tanzania by combining international accountability with sustained national-level action.

SESSION EIGHT: REFLECTIONS & TRAINING ASSESSMENT

This session, facilitated by Mr. Fundikila Wazambi, provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on their learning, share experiences, and assess the overall effectiveness and relevance of the training. The facilitator guided a structured reflection process, encouraging participants to discuss what they found most useful, what could be improved, and how they intended to apply the knowledge and skills gained in their SRHR and UPR advocacy work.

Key Reflections from Participants

Participants expressed strong appreciation for the practical focus of the training and the way complex international human rights mechanisms were broken down into accessible and actionable steps. Many noted that the training helped demystify the UPR process and clarified how it could be used strategically to advance SRHR at the national level.

Several participants emphasized that framing SRHR as human rights strengthened their advocacy confidence and legitimacy when engaging duty bearers.

One participant reflected:

Before this training, I saw SRH mainly as a health issue. Now I clearly understand that it is a human rights issue, and this gives me stronger grounds to demand accountability from government institutions.

Participant

Another participant noted the value of understanding the full advocacy cycle:

What stood out for me is learning that UPR is not just about going to Geneva. It is about what we do before and after, at community and national levels. This has changed how I will plan my advocacy.

Participant

Practical Skills and Confidence Gained

Participants reported increased confidence in:

- ④ Identifying and documenting SRHR-related human rights violations
- ④ Translating community-level issues into human rights language
- ④ Drafting and contributing to UPR stakeholder submissions
- ④ Engaging government officials and other duty bearers using UPR recommendations
- ④ Working collaboratively in coalitions to strengthen advocacy impact

One participant shared:

I now feel more confident to contribute to a stakeholder report. I understand how to link our community evidence to specific rights and make clear recommendations.

Participant

Another added:

The group work helped me see how our daily work can feed into international mechanisms. This makes our documentation work more meaningful.

Participant

Relevance to Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs)

Participants highlighted that the training was particularly relevant to their roles as WHRDs, especially in challenging shrinking civic space and increasing risks when advocating on SRHR. The session reinforced the importance of using internationally recognized mechanisms like the UPR to provide protection, visibility, and additional leverage for their advocacy.

One WHRD stated:

Using the UPR gives us another layer of protection and legitimacy. It shows that our issues are not just local complaints but international human rights concerns

Participant

Feedback on Training Methodology and Facilitation

Participants positively assessed the participatory approach, noting that group discussions, exercises, and real-life examples enhanced understanding. The combination of presentations and practical exercises was seen as effective in reinforcing learning.

A participant commented:



Some participants suggested that future trainings could allocate more time for hands-on drafting of UPR submissions and for deeper discussion of Tanzania-specific SRHR priorities.

Training Assessment

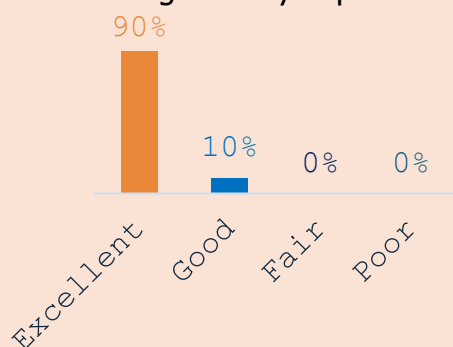
Overall, participants rated the training as highly relevant, timely, and practical. They agreed that the workshop had strengthened their understanding of:

- SRHR as human rights
- The international human rights system
- The UPR mechanism
- Practical advocacy strategies for engaging the UPR

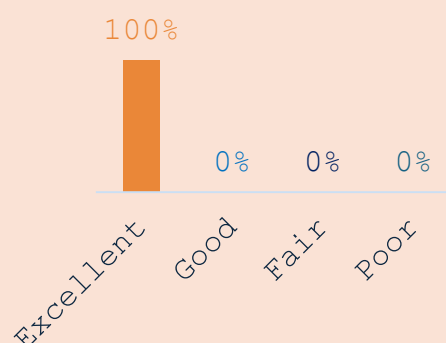
The facilitator summarized the session by emphasizing that participant feedback would inform future capacity-building activities and that continued learning and coordination would be essential for sustained SRHR advocacy.

A. Overall Assessment

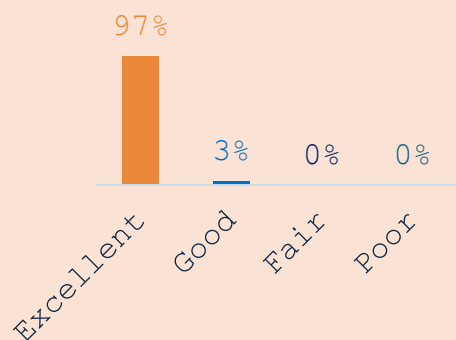
1. The training met my expectations.



2. The objectives of the training were clear.

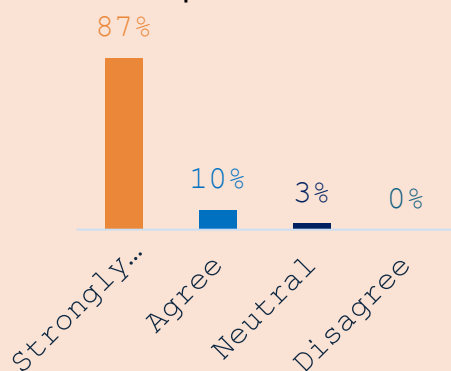


3. The training content was relevant to my work as a WHRD.

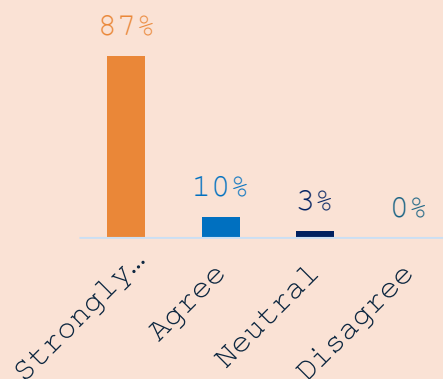


B. Content & Learning

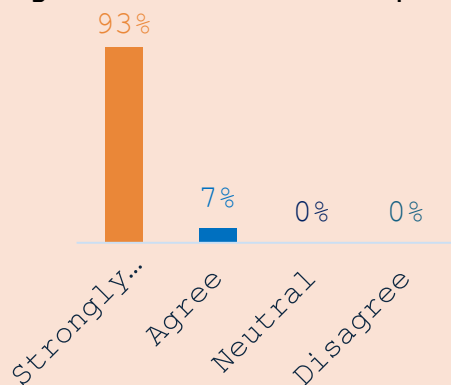
4. I have a better understanding of SRHR concepts.



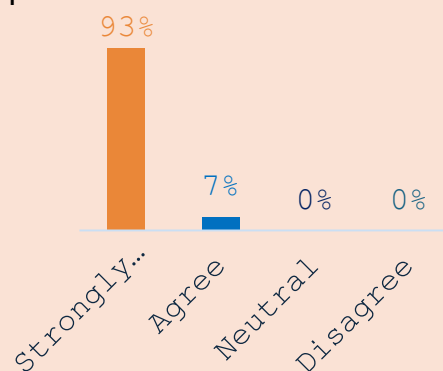
5. I better understand the UPR mechanism and how to use it for SRHR advocacy.



6. The sessions on SRHR as a human rights issue was useful and practical.



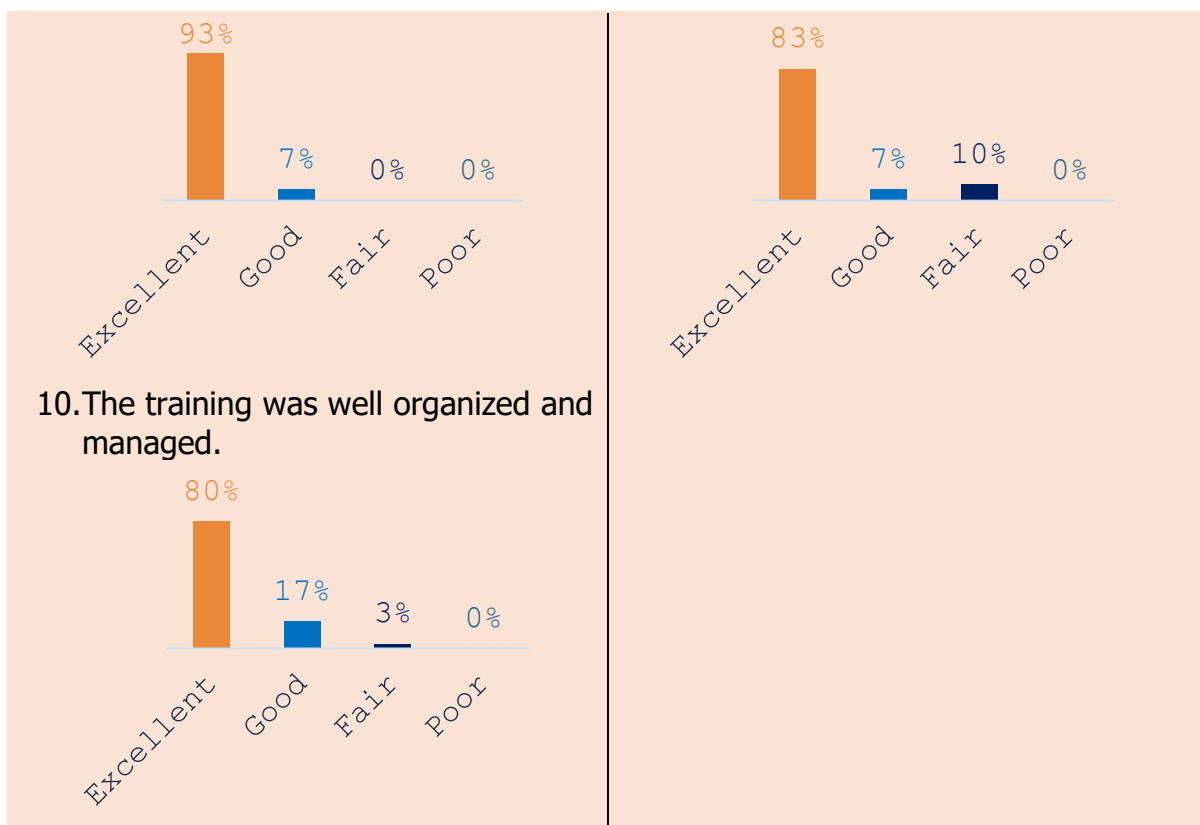
7. The sessions on advocacy and UPR engagement were useful and practical.



C. Facilitation & Organization

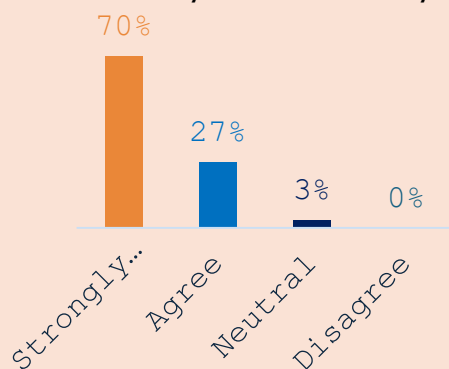
8. The facilitators were knowledgeable and effective.

9. The training methods (group work, discussions, role plays) were engaging.

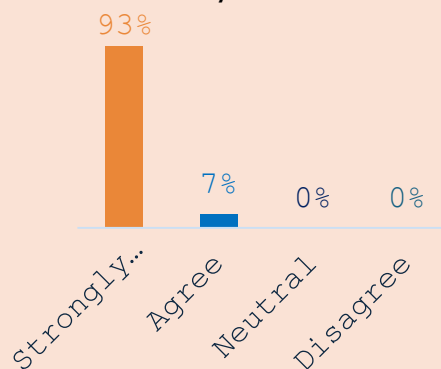


D. Application & Impact

11. I feel confident to apply what I learned in my SRHR advocacy work.



12. I will use the UPR mechanism in my future advocacy.



E. Open-Ended Questions

13. What was the most useful part of the training?

- ☒ Learning about generations and characteristics of human rights, including to place SRHR
- ☒ Understanding the UPR and how to use it for advocacy
- ☒ Linking SRHR to human rights frameworks
- ☒ Practical group work and exercises
- ☒ Learning how to draft and use UPR recommendations

14. What could be improved in future trainings?

- ④ Use Swahili Language more in facilitation so that those who are not conversant or comfortable with English can follow with ease (ensuring inclusion).
- ④ Longer training duration e.g. three days
- ④ More Tanzania-specific case studies
- ④ Follow-up or refresher trainings

15. Any other comments or suggestions?

- ④ Appreciation

This was one of the most useful trainings I have attended. Thank you to the organizers and facilitators

Participant

Please organize more trainings like this and provide technical support during the UPR process

Participant

We appreciate the opportunity and hope to continue working together as a coalition

Participant

SESSION NINE: CLOSING

The CWHRDs Tz Board Chairperson, Dr. Gladness Munuo, delivered the closing remarks, commending participants for their active engagement, commitment, and openness throughout the two-day training. The Chairperson expressed appreciation to all partners, facilitators, and participants for contributing to a productive and impactful learning process. In the closing statement, the Chairperson reaffirmed the Coalition's commitment to advancing the protection and promotion SRHR in Tanzania and across the region. She emphasized that the workshop was a strategic investment in strengthening the collective capacity of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs)

and civil society organizations to engage effectively with national, regional, and international human rights mechanisms. She encouraged participants to take ownership of the UPR process by actively contributing to stakeholder submissions, engaging in national consultations, and following up on accepted recommendations.

The Chairperson also stressed the importance of solidarity and collective action among WHRDs, particularly in a context of shrinking civic space. She encouraged participants to continue working together as a coalition, sharing information, supporting one another, and presenting a united voice on SRHR issues to increase impact and protection. She concluded by expressing confidence in the participants' ability to apply the skills and knowledge gained, stating that the CWHRDs Tz stands ready to provide ongoing coordination, technical support, and platforms for collective advocacy.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The capacity building workshop significantly strengthened the knowledge, skills, and confidence of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and civil society actors in Tanzania to engage in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) advocacy using the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism. Participants demonstrated an improved understanding of SRHR as human rights, the international human rights system, and the strategic value of the UPR as a tool for accountability and reform. Participants recognized the UPR as a powerful mechanism to amplify national advocacy, increase visibility of SRHR concerns, and leverage international commitments to drive domestic change.

As a way forward, the following actions were recommended:

Follow-up meetings and training on advocacy and engaging the UPR mechanisms before the CSO report submission deadline of 10th April, 2026

Engage a consultant to lead the process of drafting UPR report

Provide refresher sessions on SRHR legal and policy frameworks in Tanzania

Form or revive a national SRHR-UPR working group to lead joint submissions

Enhance documentation of SRHR issues and violations

Use different platforms to raise public awareness on SRHR as human rights to build broader support and accountability.

Visit UPR website (UPR Info) to learn more about Tanzania's UPR

The draft baseline survey report to be shared with participants for further inputs, if any.



7 ANNEXES

7.1 PROGRAMME

Program – Capacity Building Workshop

Venue: Point Zone Resort, Arusha
Monday 26th – Tuesday 27th January 2026

DAY 1 Monday 26th

Time	Activity	Session objective
02:00 – 02:20	Opening Session & Welcome Remark	To officially open the workshop & introduce participants
02:20-02:50	Overview of CWHRDs & workshop objectives	To introduce WHRDs and clarify workshop goals
02:50-03:30	Introduction to SRHR concept & current SRHR situation in Tanzania	To build a common understanding of SRHR concepts & context
03:30 – 03:45	Overview of the legal & policy environment for SRHR in Tanzania	To introduce participants to key laws, policies & commitments influencing SRHR in Tanzania
03:45 – 04:00	Reflections, Q&A and Day one Wrap-up & evening tea	To reflect on learning and clarify key issues from Day One

DAY 2 Tuesday 27th

Time	Activity	Session objective
08:30 – 09:00	Recap of Day one	To review key takeaways from the day one
09:00 – 10:30	SRHR Advocacy frameworks & Human rights – based approach	To strengthen understanding of rights-based SRHR Advocacy
10:30 – 10:45	Tea Break	
10:45 – 12:00	Understanding the UPR Mechanism and its relevance to SRHR advocacy	To explain the UPR mechanism and its use in SRHR advocacy

12:00 – 01:00	Lunch Break	
01:00 – 02:30	SRHR advocacy strategies for WHRDs	To equip participants with practical advocacy skills
02:30 – 03:15	Group work and presentations	To apply learning through group discussion and presentations
03:15 – 04:00	Way forward, commitments, evaluation & closing & evening tea	To agree on next steps, evaluate the workshop & closing the session



